

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Cites ExxonMobil for Failing to Repair Equipment that Exposed Workers to Dangerous Chemical Leaks

Santa Ana—Cal/OSHA issued citations to ExxonMobil Refining & Supply Company today after it discovered the company did not repair faulty equipment at its Torrance refinery for four years, exposing workers to possible serious injury or death.

Cal/OSHA opened an investigation following a hydrofluoric acid leak at the refinery's alkylation unit on September 6, 2015. Investigators found that the leak was related to a temporary clamp that was installed on a three-inch nozzle flange following an earlier leak in 2011. The nozzle was not replaced until January, 2016.

“This is a case, a minor repair could have prevented workers at this refinery from exposure to a life-threatening acid,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “These citations and penalties are a wake-up call that refineries must follow strict safety protocols to protect their employees.”

The three citations issued today include one willful-serious, indicating the employer was aware of the hazardous condition and did not take reasonable steps to address it, and two general citations for ExxonMobil's failure to conduct a hazard analysis and identify and address the 2011 leak. Proposed penalties total \$72,120.

ExxonMobil mitigated the leak caused by the faulty clamp within 48 hours of the release. The company also removed tank 5C-31 from service, where the faulty nozzle was attached, to make repairs. Before ExxonMobil was allowed to restart operations in January, a complete inspection of the alkylation unit was conducted to ensure there were no additional leaking flanges or nozzles.

Cal/OSHA [previously issued](#) 19 citations with proposed penalties of \$566,600 to ExxonMobil following an explosion on February 18, 2015 that injured four workers. Today's citations are unrelated to that incident.

Cal/OSHA's [Process Safety Management Unit](#) is responsible for inspecting refineries and chemical plants that handle large quantities of toxic and flammable materials. Health and safety standards enforced by the PSM Unit, including adequate employee

training, are intended to prevent catastrophic explosions, fires and releases of dangerous chemicals.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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